

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
20 March 1985

CIA BILL  
NEW YORK, NY

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY HAS PROPOSED LEGISLATION MAKING IT A CRIME FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES TO "WILLFULLY" DISCLOSE NATIONAL SECRETS WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION, THE NEW YORK TIMES REPORTED TODAY.

THE PROPOSAL SIGNED BY CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM CASEY AND SENT TO THE WHITE HOUSE PROVIDES FOR PRISON TERMS OF UP TO FIVE YEARS AND FINES OF \$25,000 FINE FOR ANYONE CONVICTED OF GIVING REPORTERS OR OTHERS OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT "ANY CLASSIFIED INFORMATION," WITH CERTAIN EXCEPTIONS, THE TIMES SAID.

WHITE HOUSE DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY LARRY SPEAKES SAID TODAY THE MEASURE "HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED IN THE WHITE HOUSE" AND WAS NOT SOLICITED BY PRESIDENT REAGAN. ASKED IF THE PRESIDENT WOULD SUPPORT IT, SPEAKES SAID, "IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN."

THE SPOKESMAN SAID BILLS NORMALLY ARE ROUTED THROUGH THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT OF BUDGET AND THEN SENT TO OTHER AGENCIES FOR COMMENT. "IT COULD WELL BE IN THAT PROCESS," HE ADDED.

ACCORDING TO THE TIMES, INFORMATION WOULD BE CONSIDERED "PROPERLY CLASSIFIED" IF ITS DISCLOSURE "REASONABLY COULD BE EXPECTED TO DAMAGE THE NATIONAL SECURITY."

ALTHOUGH THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ALREADY CONTENTS SUCH DISCLOSURES VIOLATE ESPIONAGE AND THEFT OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY LAWS, ITS INTERPRETATION IS BEING QUESTIONED IN A PENDING COURT CASE, THE NEWSPAPER SAID.

THE TIMES ALSO SAID THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION DOES NOT APPEAR TO AUTHORIZE PROSECUTION OF REPORTERS OR OTHERS WHO PUBLISH SECRETS LEAKED TO THEM. IT COULD, HOWEVER, FORM A BASIS FOR FORCING JOURNALISTS TO REVEAL SOURCES, THE NEWSPAPER SAID.

ANYONE CHARGED WITH THE CRIME COULD AVOID CONVICTION BY ESTABLISHING THAT THE INFORMATION DID NOT COME FROM THE DEFENDANT'S GOVERNMENT SERVICE, THAT IT HAD ALREADY BEEN PUBLISHED OR THAT IT WAS NOT "PROPERLY CLASSIFIED," THE TIMES SAID.

THE AGENCY IS ASKING THAT THE LEGISLATION BECOME EFFECTIVE IN 1986, THE REPORT SAID.

CIA SPOKESWOMAN ~~KATHY PHERSON~~ TOLD THE TIMES THE PROPOSAL HAD BEEN DESIGNATED SECRET BY THE AGENCY BECAUSE IT WAS UNDER DISCUSSION AND DISCLOSURE WOULD BE "INAPPROPRIATE" AND "PREMATURE." GEORGE LAUDER, CHIEF SPOKESMAN FOR THE CIA, DECLINED COMMENT ON WHETHER THE PROPOSAL WAS CLASSIFIED, THE NEWSPAPER SAID.

CIA SPOKESWOMAN PATTY VOLZ TOLD THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, "MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT IT IS NOT CLASSIFIED." SHE REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE LEGISLATION, SAYING "IT'S JUST NOT APPROPRIATE TO COMMENT ON IT."